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Seven in ten adults have insufficient problem-solving skills for everyday life

Almost seven out of ten Western Australians had insufficient problem-solving skills for the demands of everyday life, according to analysis released today by the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS).

For prose, document, numeracy and health, approximately half of Western Australian adults (15-74 years old) assessed were found to be below the minimum literacy requirement deemed necessary to function effectively in a complex society.

Literacy was found to be poorest in the older age groups, among those with lower levels of education and those who were not in the employed labour force. Lower literacy was also associated with lower income earners.

Individuals with poor literacy were more likely to watch television; less likely to enjoy reading or use a computer or the internet; and less likely to participate in both formal and informal learning activities.

Levels of adult literacy in Western Australia were generally found to be similar, or slightly above, the national average.

First home buyers borrowing more

Coinciding with the re-introduction of subsidies for first home buyers during the Global Financial Crisis in 2008, was an initial modest rise in the number of first home buyer loans in Western Australia, according to analysis released today by the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS).

This was followed by a more significant percentage increase in the average first home loan size as interest rates dropped and the economy recovered.

The First Home Owners Boost, which commenced in November 2008, was accompanied by a small initial increase (6%) in the number of commitments. However, over the following six months, the proportion of loans to first home buyers in Western Australia grew from just over 30% to a record 43%.

Excluding the effects of non-first home re-financing, the average size of first home buyer loans, in November 2008, exceeded that of other home buyers for the first time since April 1992.

Further information is available in the feature articles in today's release, *Western Australia's Statistical Indicators* (cat. no. 1367.5)

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